

## **Proposed Short North Parking Pilot**

### ***Background***

At the request of the residents of Short North neighborhoods, the City of Columbus commissioned a parking study in 2014 to evaluate parking pressures in the area. The parking study consultants were tasked with developing a comprehensive approach to parking management, supply and operation in the neighborhood.

Throughout the study, the consultants conducted several open houses, stakeholder interviews, focus groups and an online survey to gather feedback from the residents, businesses and developers. The consultants also evaluated the existing parking conditions and completed a parking inventory of the entire area to determine the number of available on-street and off-street parking spaces in the Short North. To learn more about the data collected, check out the Short North Parking Study Final Report located at <https://www.columbus.gov/publicservice/parking/Columbus-Short-North-Parking-Study/>.

Over the past 18 months, the Short North Working Group, which includes representatives from the Victorian Village Commission, Italian Village Commission, Short North Civic Association, Short North Foundation, Italian Village Society, Harrison West Society, University Area Commission, Victorian Gate and the Short North Alliance, has been meeting in an effort to evaluate the study recommendations and provide the City with initial feedback and suggestions to move the recommendations forward. Recently, members from Weinland Park Civic Association and Preserve the Short North were added. The working group has taken a thoughtful approach when vetting the City's recommendations to consider the needs of the residents, businesses and visitors as well as maintain the vibrancy of the neighborhood and improve parking conditions.

### ***Where are we today***

The City is proposing the Short North Parking Pilot Program in an effort to protect residential streets; to manage the demand for on-street parking created by commercial attractions; to promote retail patronage; to encourage the use of alternate forms of transportation; and limit congestion in the Short North. The City released a draft proposal in March 2017. In an effort to gather feedback from the neighborhood, the Department of Public Service sponsored four open houses that garnered more than 300 attendees, posted an online survey that brought more than 1,100 responses, and received more than 150 emails through the Website. City Council also held a public hearing in March that included a formal presentation of the information and provided attendees an opportunity to share feedback.

Based upon the feedback received, the City made several changes to accommodate the requests of residents while creating a parking pilot program that will meet the goals established. The City was able to reduce the proposed annual fees by half, revamp the proposed guest pass system to provide more flexibility, and adjust the boundaries of the proposed parking zones based on neighborhood input.

Determining the appropriate on-street restriction has been the most challenging component of the proposal. The goal is to place a time restriction on the street and price the streets appropriately to generate turnover and create more opportunity for residents to park on the street. Based on the feedback received, there was a desire to have a permit only restriction during the evening and overnight hours because of the parking demands from evening commercial activity. While the City understands the desire for permanently restricted streets, the City determined that overly restricting the streets was not the best first step in improving parking challenges. During the pilot, the City will monitor occupancy and if the streets are still heavily occupied by visitors, pricing would be adjusted to incentivize visitors to use local public parking garages and alternate forms of transportation. If price is not encouraging other parking options, the City may adjust the on-street restriction to provide more protections for residents. A balanced approach is needed to provide opportunity for residents to park on the street they live and provide for short term parking for visitors, both residential and business, during the evening hours.

One of the critical elements in the proposal is the significant impact to employees. Employees are critical to the success of the arts district and the City is committed to finding safe and affordable options. In an effort to fund an

employee parking program, the City will create a Parking Benefit District where a portion of the revenue generated from paid parking will go back into the district. The funds may be used to make neighborhood improvements that will benefit both residents and businesses.

The city of Columbus is committed to implementing parking regulations in the Short North that create more predictability for residents and businesses and continue to keep the neighborhood as an attractive and viable arts district.

### *Next steps*

The Department of Public Service will hold two public meeting to provide an opportunity for residents and businesses to learn about the revised pilot proposal. A formal presentation will be provided and roundtable discussions will follow. Meeting information is below:

- Thursday, July 6, 2017 from 5:30pm – 7:30pm at the Goodale Park Shelterhouse.
- Thursday, July 13, 2017 from 5:30pm – 7:30pm in the Junior Achievement Gym, 68 E. 2nd Ave.

On Wednesday, July 19, 2017 at 5:30pm, Councilmember Shannon Hardin will convene the Public Service and Transportation Committee for a public hearing in Columbus City Council Chambers. Parking experts and Public Service staff will provide a complete overview of the proposal. Those wishing to comment at the hearing will need to complete a speaker slip and will have three minutes to speak on the proposal.

Upon completion of the public meetings and public hearing, the Department of Public Service will take legislation to City Council for its consideration that would provide the Director the authority to establish a Short North Parking Pilot Program to protect neighborhood parking, to manage the demand for on-street parking created by commercial attractions, to promote retail patronage, and to encourage the use of alternate forms of transportation and limit congestion in the Short North.

If passed by City Council, the Director will be given the authority to establish permit parking within the boundaries of the defined pilot area, adjust paid parking rates, adjust the on-street restriction, and create a parking benefit district. The legislation also requires the Director to make proper justification for making changes and requires proper notification. The legislation also clearly defines requirements of an implementation plan and annual reporting requirements for transparency. Once the legislation has been passed by City Council, the process will begin to finalize permit zone boundaries, finalize rules and regulations for permit parking, and change the on-street restriction for a January 2018 implementation.

Prior to implementation, public meetings will be held to share the following:

1. A map clearly defining the boundaries of the pilot zone, residential parking permit zones, and on-street paid parking within the residential permit parking zones;
2. Detailed descriptions of on-street restrictions, hours of enforcement, and initial parking rates for on-street parking;
3. Rules and regulations that apply to all components of the parking pilot program; and
4. Implementation plan for obtaining parking permits, installing on-street parking signage, and installing new parking technologies.

The legislation that will be brought before City Council will not determine the boundaries of each zone, the on-street restriction, the annual fees associated with permit parking, the paid street boundaries, enforcement hours, etc. Those specifics will continue to be reviewed and additional public meetings will be held once those issues are finalized.

To learn more about the proposal, please visit <https://www.columbus.gov/publicservice/parking/proposed-short-north-pilot-program/>

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